

Do You Have

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?





HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND YOU

High blood pressure (hypertension) is called the silent killer. This is because many people who have it don't know it. You can take an easy test to see if your blood pressure is too high. If it is high, you can take steps to lower it. Doing so could save your life.

Who Gets High Blood Pressure?

Anyone can get high blood pressure. It must be treated. Untreated high blood pressure can cause

♦ Stroke

- **♦** Blindness
- ◆ Kidney disease
- ◆ Heart problems

What You Can Do

Read this booklet about high blood pressure and learn these things:

- ◆ What high blood pressure is
- ♦ How to get your blood pressure tested
- ◆ How to control high blood pressure

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Some Helpful Words to Know

- ◆ **Blood vessels:** These are like hoses that carry blood to all parts of your body.
- ◆ Cholesterol: A type of fat that travels in your blood. It can block your blood vessels.
- ◆ Heart attack: This happens when a blood vessel in the heart gets blocked, causing damage to the heart.
- ◆ **Hypertension:** The medical word for high blood pressure.
- ◆ **Stroke:** This happens when a blood vessel in the brain gets blocked or breaks, causing brain damage.

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COULD YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Some people are more likely than others to get high blood pressure. To see if you are at greater risk, take this quiz.

High Blood Pressure Quiz

Check each box below that applies to you.

Yo	our Lifestyle
	You smoke.
	You often eat salty, fried, or greasy food.
	You often have more than 2 alcoholic drinks (a total of 1 ounce of pure alcohol) per day.
	You often feel very stressed.
	You don't get much exercise at work or at home.
Yo	our Background
	You're over age 60.
	A parent, brother, or sister has high blood pressure or heart disease.
	You're African-American.
Yo	our Health History
	You're overweight.
	Your cholesterol level is over 200.
	You have diabetes, heart disease, or kidney disease.

How Many Boxes Did You Check?

You have had a stroke or a heart attack.

The more boxes you checked, the higher your risk of high blood pressure. But you can learn ways to keep high blood pressure from hurting you. Keep reading.



WHAT IS BLOOD PRESSURE?

Blood pressure is the force of your heart pumping blood and moving it through your body. Blood pressure that is too high can hurt your body.

Your Heart and Blood Vessels Work Hard for You

Each time your heart beats, it sends blood through your blood vessels. Your blood vessels are like hoses that carry the blood through your body. This blood is full of oxygen and other things that your body needs.

Blood Pressure Readings

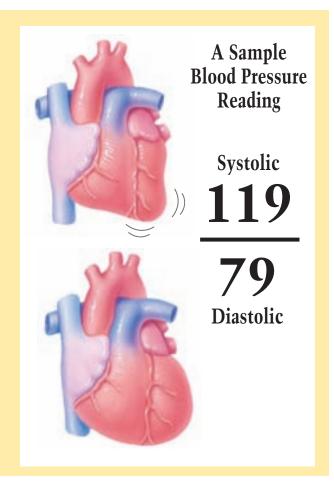
The force (pressure) of the blood through the vessels can be measured. This is called a blood pressure reading. A sample normal blood pressure reading looks like this: 119/79. Your numbers may be higher or lower.

Systolic Blood Pressure

This is the top or first number. It measures the force while your heart beats. A normal, healthy systolic blood pressure is less than 120.

Diastolic Blood Pressure

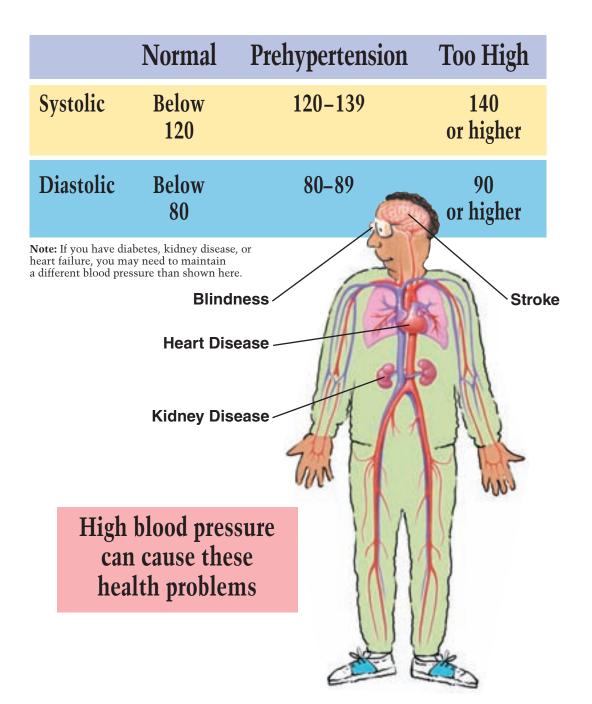
This is the bottom or second number. It measures the force between heartbeats. A normal, healthy diastolic blood pressure is less than 80.





WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Normal blood pressure changes often. Doing hard work like moving furniture or playing sports makes the top number go up. Feeling stressed or very upset may also make it go up. In healthy people, blood pressure goes back down after exercise or stress. But it stays high in people with high blood pressure.





YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE EVALUATION

You can go to your doctor's office to get your blood pressure measured. If it is high, even just a little, your doctor can help you with a plan to keep it under control.

Measuring Your Blood Pressure

Getting your blood pressure tested is easy and does not hurt. You may be tested at different times. This is because your blood pressure can change during the day. It can change if you feel stressed, angry, or even happy.

If Your Blood Pressure Is High

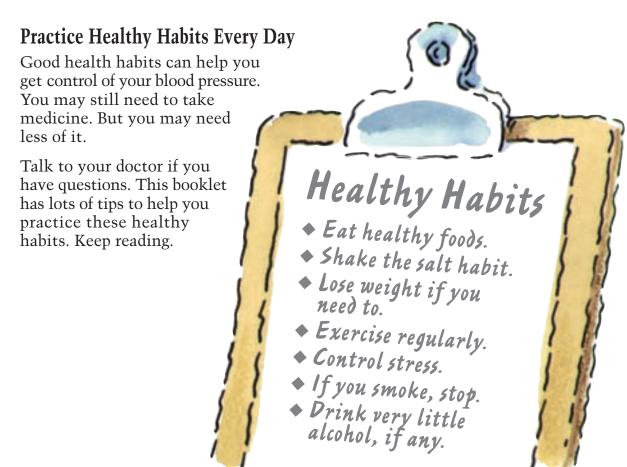
Your doctor can help you make a plan to control high blood pressure. The plan can keep you healthy. Be sure to follow it. Ask questions or call the doctor's office if you don't understand any part of it.

TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR Take notes. This will help you remember what the doctor said. Bring someone along to help you understand what the doctor says. Bring a tape recorder. That way you can play back the doctor's instructions later.



YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL PLAN

Your plan may include changing unhealthy habits into healthy habits. It may also include taking blood pressure medicine.



If You Need Medicine

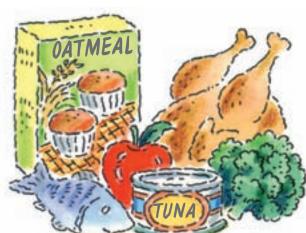
Your doctor may need to prescribe special medicine to help control your high blood pressure. This medicine helps your blood flow more easily through your blood vessels.





What you eat (your **diet**) may put you at risk for high blood pressure. To help control this risk, choose high-fiber foods and foods that are low in salt and fat. With a little work, you can enjoy your food and help control your blood pressure.

- ◆ Eat low-fat and nonfat. foods. High-fat foods can make you gain weight.
- ◆ Try not to eat fried foods. They are higher in fat. Eat foods that are baked, microwaved, grilled, or broiled without much fat.
- ◆ Reduce the amount of animal products you eat, and trim fat from meat.



- ◆ Fast food is often high in fat and salt. Look for fast food that is lower in fat.
- ◆ Eat more fiber. Fiber is in plant foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.
- ♦ Choose 100% whole-grain cereals and breads. They're high in fiber.

• Eat chicken and fish that are not breaded. Don't eat the skin.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- ♦ Instead of a high-fat cream sauce, try a
- low-fat, low-salt tomato sauce. ♦ Instead of a high-fat breakfast of eggs,
- bacon, and buttered toast, have wholegrain cereal, fruit, fat-free milk, and ♦ Use nonstick sprays or cookware so you
 - will need little, if any, oil.

Shake the Salt Habit

Salt (sodium) can raise your blood pressure. Less salt may change the taste of food.

But adding other spices can make food taste better.

- ◆ Don't add salt to food. Many foods already have a lot of salt.
- ◆ Read food labels to help you keep away from salty foods.
- ◆ When cooking, use only one-half the salt a recipe calls for.
- ◆ Use salt-free spices and flavorings or salt substitutes.



Lose Weight If You Need To

Being overweight is a risk factor you can control. The best way to lose weight is with exercise and a low-calorie, low-fat diet.

- ◆ Extra weight makes your heart work harder.
- ◆ Losing even 10 pounds can help lower your blood pressure.
- ◆ Exercise will help you lose weight and keep it off.
- ◆ Join a weight-loss group. Ask your doctor.





More Healthy Habits

Following healthy habits can help you keep your blood pressure under control. Get fit, reduce stress, and don't smoke. Also, avoid alcohol to stay healthy.



Get Fit

Being fit will help keep your heart healthy and lower your blood pressure. It will also help you lose weight and keep it off. And it makes you look and feel better and reduces stress.

You don't have to run a race to be fit and healthy. Walking, bicycling,

and swimming are good and safe. Check with your doctor about the best ways to get fit.

Check with your doctor before lifting weights or doing any resistance exercises.

TIPS FOR FITNESS

- ◆ Exercise for 30 minutes or more on most days.
- ♦ Move quickly. But slow down if you are out of breath and can't talk easily.
- ♦ Walk whenever you can.

Reduce Stress

Stress can make you feel that your life is out of control. Stress can make your heart work harder. Ask your doctor about taking a class to learn how to control stress.

- ◆ Exercise can help calm you down.
- ♦ Learn to say "no."
- ◆ Do what really matters and forget the rest.
- ◆ Relax. Close your eyes and pretend you are in a calm, peaceful place.



Stop Smoking

If you smoke, you should quit. Ask your doctor about stop-smoking programs. Smoking raises your blood pressure. Your heart and blood vessels are damaged by smoking.

Millions of smokers are now ex-smokers. You can do it too!

Avoid Too Much Caffeine

Caffeine is a drug that may raise your blood pressure briefly. If you have high blood pressure, ask your doctor if you should avoid caffeine. Caffeine is found in many drinks like coffee, sodas, and tea. You can avoid caffeine by picking drinks that say "no caffeine" or "decaffeinated."

Limit Alcohol

Alcohol raises your blood pressure. It also adds calories to your diet. This makes it harder to lose weight.

- ◆ Don't have more than one drink a day.
- ◆ If you need help to quit drinking,talk to your doctor.







Sometimes, healthy habits are not enough to lower your blood pressure. Your doctor will tell you if you also need medicine. But still keep doing the healthy habits. They work with your medicine to lower your blood pressure.

Your doctor may prescribe more than one medicine. If it makes you feel bad or worse than before, tell your doctor. Your medicine may need to be changed.

Write the answer after each question.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Do I take my medicine before or after eating?		
Is there anything I should not eat or drink?		
How often do I take my medicine?		
Are there other medicines I should not take?		
What side effects might I have?		
When should I call you about side effects?		
What if I forget to take my medicine?		
Have often de I need to have my blood nyecouse checked?		

Always Take Your Medicine

Always take your medicine, even if you feel great. You may need to take it for the rest of your life. Don't stop unless your doctor tells you to. Medicine can control your high blood pressure, but it won't cure it.



TIPS FOR TAKING YOUR MEDICINE

- ◆ Take it the same time each day.
- ◆ Put it by your toothbrush.
- ◆ Use a pill box that holds a pill for each
- ◆ Put a calendar by your medicine. When you take your medicine, make a check on the calendar.

Talk to Your Pharmacist

Pharmacists are experts who know a lot about medicines. They know how medicines should be taken. They know which ones should not be taken with your blood pressure medicine. (Some other drugs can cause problems with your blood pressure medicine.)

- ◆ Ask your pharmacist or doctor for written information about your medicine.
- ◆ Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines that you take. This includes prescription and nonprescription medicines, like those for colds and allergies or arthritis.





When to Call Your Doctor:

- ◆ If you have headaches
- ◆ If you feel dizzy
- ◆ If you feel sick to your stomach



KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS

Write down your blood pressure each time you have it taken. This will tell you if your blood pressure plan is working. You want it to go down or stay at a safe number.



Date	Systolic (top number)	Diastolic (bottom number)



There are lots of resources that can help you learn to live with high blood pressure. Here are just a few:

Blood pressure information

American Heart Association 800-242-8721 (heart.org) For the local number, look in your phone book.

Stop-smoking programs

American Lung Association (www.lungusa.org)

American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org)

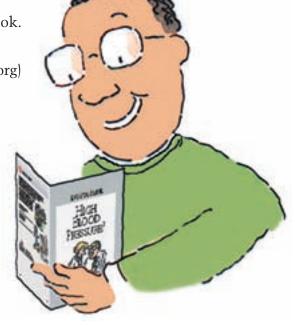
For local chapters, check your phone book.

Stress information or classes

Call the Family Service Agency or Mental Health Association in your area. Check your phone book.

Support groups to quit drinking

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) 212-870-3400 (www.aa.org) Check your phone book for the number in your area.



Community information and referral centers

These can give you information about programs and classes to help you live healthy with high blood pressure. Check the community information section of the phone book. Or ask your local library or health department for the phone number of your community information and referral center.

Public library

The library is a good place to find information on high blood pressure. Ask the reference librarian for reading materials and for information about community classes and programs.

Your health care plan or local hospital

If you are covered by health insurance, belong to an HMO, or have a hospital nearby, ask if they have information or programs.

Local public health department

They may have classes or information. They may also do free blood pressure checks. Ask to talk to a public health nurse or a health educator.



By making some simple changes in your life, and taking medicine if you need to, you can control your blood pressure.

The healthy habits in this booklet are good

lifetime habits for everyone. The more you practice these habits, the easier

they are to do. And be sure to get your blood pressure tested often. This will tell you if your blood pressure control plan is working.

Your doctor's or clinic's phone number:

Your pharmacist's phone number:



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